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031057Z Jan 05

UNCLAS RANGOON 000009

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV, CA TASK FORCE, OPS CENTER
BANGKOK FOR USAID, FAS
USPACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [AMGT](#) [BM](#) [NGO](#)

SUBJECT: TFX001: (1/3) RED CROSS IN BURMA REPORTS HIGHER CASUALTIES

REF: A. COM-TASK FORCE 1/2 EMAIL

1B. 04 RANGOON 1649 AND PREVIOUS

11. (SBU) Summary: A preliminary Red Cross report on the extent of the damage in Burma gives figures higher than the GOB's official tally, but still quite low compared to Thailand. UN agencies and NGOs are continuing their assessments and small-scale relief operations, however the GOB is not likely to make a formal request for aid. There are no reports of Amcit casualties or verified cases of missing Americans in Burma. End summary.

IFRC: Death Toll Higher Than Reported

12. (SBU) The International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), coordinating the international community's response to the tsunami and earthquake damage in Burma, released a preliminary report on December 30th collating the information collected to date from various agencies' missions to the impacted parts of the country. According to the report, the "verified" toll in Burma is 86 dead, 45 injured, 10 missing, and 6,250 homeless.

13. (SBU) As reported ref B, the most heavily damaged parts of the country are the Irrawaddy River delta southwest of Rangoon (47 dead, 4,500 homeless), and the southeastern coast (just north of Ranong, Thailand) in Kawthaung, Tanintharyi Division (27 dead, 1,750 homeless). The IFRC report further corroborated previous reporting (ref B) that the tourist beach areas on the Bay of Bengal (west and northwest of Rangoon) were not damaged. IFRC officials noted that various NGOs and UN agencies were planning or now undertaking additional assessment trips by air, sea, and road to more remote areas of the Irrawaddy delta and islands off the Tanintharyi coast.

Assessment and Aid Distribution Ongoing

14. (SBU) Though the GOB has not made a formal request for aid, the IFRC noted that UN agencies, international NGOs, the Myanmar Red Cross, and, to a lesser extent, the GOB were providing basic assistance and emergency shelter in the worst-hit areas. According to IFRC officials, an appeal for funds to assist in Burma would be integrated into the general UN "Flash Appeal" for all countries affected by the earthquake/tsunami. This appeal is reportedly to be launched on January 5th.

Americans are Safe

15. (U) Embassy Rangoon's Consular Section has been working to clear remaining welfare/whereabouts inquiries. There have still been no reports of American Citizen casualties or verified cases of missing Americans.
MARTINEZ